

89

# A DEFENCE of the Majority of the Infirmary at Westminster, against a small Minority of it.

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A Letter from a Subscriber to the Westminster Infirmary, residing in Westminster, to  
a Subscriber living in the Country.

S I R,

I AM favoured with yours of the first Instant. Your affectionate Enquiry after us is obliging: Your Surprise at our late unhappy Differences is no more than I expected: Where Numbers are to act together, that there should be amongst them some Diversity of Opinions, is nothing new, (in which Case the Sense of the Majority is usually conclusive;) but when a Society of Gentlemen, embark'd in the same common Design of doing Good, (each of whom, it is to be hoped, could have nothing in View but to promote, with their own private Purses, the Welfare and Happiness of such of their Fellow-Creatures as stood most in need of their Assistance) carry their Divisions to such a Height as to separate from each other, to separate with Anger and Resentment, and cut off all Hopes of Re-union; to account for this is a Task too difficult for me: Faults there must have been; in whom, I will not presume to determine: But as you are pleased to honour us with your Continuance in *The subsisting Infirmary at Westminster*, to which you was an original Subscriber, you are justly intitled to the following plain Narrative of Facts, from which you may probably form such a Judgment of the present Posture of our Affairs, as will enable you to give a competent Satisfaction to those Gentlemen of your Neighbourhood, who are not prejudiced against us.

In the Year 1719, the late Mr. Henry Hoare, and several other well-disposed Gentlemen, desirous to lay the Foundation of a most beneficent and extensive Charity, viz. *That of providing for such sick and needy Persons, as were destitute of proper Assistance, and oftentimes of common Necessaries*; after frequent Meetings and due Consideration, concurred at last in Opinion, that nothing would more effectually answer the end proposed, than fixing an Infirmary in *St. Margaret's Parish, Westminster*, (a Part of the Town where something of this Sort seem'd to be most wanted) and supporting the same by voluntary Subscriptions from Year to Year. Accordingly they formed themselves into a Society, took a House in *Petty-France* for this Purpose, afterwards removed into *Chapel-street*, (where they now are) and are known by the Name of *The Society for relieving the Sick and Needy at the Publick Infirmary in Westminster*.

For the Encouragement they have met with, and the Success they have had, I refer you to the Account annually published: Neither need I inform you (who have seen the Preamble to the Subscription-Roll, and have sometimes favoured us with your Presence both at our Weekly Meetings and General Boards) that every Subscriber (be the Sum by him subscribed more or less) is a *Trustee* for and *Governor* of this Charity, and that by a Majority of these all Orders relating to the Charity have from time to time been made, altered, or reversed, as Occasion requir'd.

Inconveniencies and Abuses will sometimes be found in the best Institutions, and an early Discovery was made amongst us, that the Drugs and Medicines laid in for our Use, were neither in Quality nor Price such as answer'd our Intentions; an Inconvenience owing (it was thought) to the Manner of providing them. Gentlemen who saw this Abuse, and knew how to reform it, propos'd their Schemes, but were always oppos'd and over-ruled.

At length the Matter grew too flagrant to be longer conniv'd at, and at a full Meeting of the Society, an Order was made to the following Purport, viz. *That the Physicians, Surgeons, Apothecaries and Druggists who were of the Society, should be a standing Committee for the Inspection and Approbation of such Medicines and Drugs as it should be thought necessary to provide for the Use of the Infirmary. That this Committee should meet every first Monday in the Month, at which time two of the Apothecaries (who were to take their Turn by Rotation) should lay before them, for their Inspection, such Medicines and Drugs as the Physicians should direct; and as the Committee approved or disapproved thereof, they should be purchased or rejected.*

This Committee has answer'd all our Expectations: The Medicines are no longer defective; and this important Article of our Expences is, I assure you, lessen'd to a surprizing Degree.

After this, proper Enquiries were made into other Abuses, which nearly concern'd the Welfare and Credit of the Society, and such Enquiries strenuously oppos'd, for what Reasons the Opposers best know; but it was happy for us that the Reformers were a Majority. The last Effort to distress our Measures was a Scheme form'd to remove the Infirmary to *Laneborough-House*, by which we of this Neighbourhood should have been rendered incapable, as it were, of attending the publick Business of the Society with such Assiduity as was requisite. This Project was disapproved of by much the greatest Part of our Society, who were desirous (when our Circumstances would permit us to extend our Charity, by augmenting the Number of Patients) of removing to some Houses propos'd to us by our worthy Benefactor Mr. Green, which, in our Judgments, were more commodious both for us and the poor People under our Care. This Contrariety of Opinions concerning the different Houses propos'd, occasion'd some warm Debates; to calm which for the present, it was propos'd at a General Board, unanimously Resolved, and an Entry of such Resolution made upon our Books, *That the farther Consideration of this Matter should be suspended for six Weeks, and that no new House at all should be taken or contract'd for till after the Expiration of that time.* Is it to be credited, that immediately after this solemn Resolution, (or before it) *Laneborough-House* was actually taken for an Infirmary, by some Gentlemen who consented to the Suspension for six Weeks? The Consequence you'll easily imagine — A Separation ensued; the first Step to which was a formal Resignation made by the Physicians and Surgeon. Surpriz'd and griev'd thus to find ourselves at once depriv'd of the most useful Instruments for carrying on our Design, and the Poor under our Protection thus unexpectedly left destitute of proper Care and Relief, we made immediate Application for Assistance to Dr. Wigan and Dr. Cotes as Physicians, and Mr. Pyle as Surgeon, all three Subscribers to the Charity.

Since the Separation every thing has succeeded to our Wishes; Strife and Debates are no longer amongst us; private Views are sunk in the Common Cause; new Subscribers pour in upon us; the old ones double their Subscriptions; we act with one Heart and Voice; each Member is satisfied, and all is well. This pleasing Prospect has encouraged us to agree with Mr. Green for three Houses contiguous to each other, which (as I before observ'd) are exceeding proper for our Purpose, and I doubt not, but in a short time I shall have the Pleasure of informing you, that we are capable of receiving and relieving above twice as many In-Patients as we have hitherto had.

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The Quantum of our Stock you'll see upon the Ballance of the last Year's Accounts. The Report you mention of a Division of This between the *Old* and *New Infirmary* is groundless. We have upon this Head consulted the ablest Council in the Kingdom, who assure us, *That as the Members of the subsisting Infirmary at Westminster were greatly the Majority of the Whole, the Disposal of the Money in Bank is solely in them, and that nothing can wrest it out of their Hands but Mal-Application*, an Event not to be suppos'd. If we are driven into Courts of Law (which I own I cannot fear) be assur'd, Sir, we shall, with a Spirit and Resolution becoming the Trustees of so laudable a Charity, open our private Purfes in Defence of our undoubted Rights.

I cannot conclude without informing you (what a Temper benevolent as Yours will rejoice to hear) that the new Infirmary at *Lanesborough-House* goes on well; their Subscription-Roll already swells with the Names of Persons of Quality, Worth, and Fortune, (some of which are likewise Subscribers to Us). May the Members thereof be truly successful in all their Endeavours to do Good: May they be as zealous and unanimous in *these Endeavours* as those from whom they have Divided; and may the Division itself (which our weaker Judgments dreaded as hurtful to the Charity) be, in the Hands of an All-wise Providence, a Means of making it more Diffusive, is the earnest Prayer of,

S I R,

Westminster, December 1733.

Your most Affectionate and Faithful Servant.

*An Account of the Occasion and Manner of Erecting an Hospital at Lanesborough-House, near Hyde-Park Corner. Published by Order of the General Board of Governors there, Wednesday February the 6th, 1733.*

Several well-disposed Persons having long observed that there was no Hospital within the Liberty of *Westminster*, for the Relief of the many poor, sick and lame Objects that offered; and that such an Hospital was absolutely necessary in so large and populous a City; those in *London* being by no Means sufficient: They therefore agreed to set on Foot a Subscription for an *Infirmary* there, to relieve such poor, sick and lame Persons as should appear to the Subscribers to be proper Objects of Charity.

Accordingly in the Year 1719, a Subscription was opened, and a House was taken and fitted up in *Petty-France*, which being found to be too small, they in the Year 1724, removed to *Chapel-street*, where they have ever since continued.

In both these Places great Numbers have been cured, as appears from their printed Accounts, under the Care, and by the Charitable Assistance of Dr. *Alexander Stuart*, Physician to Her Majesty, Dr. *George Lewis Teissier*, Physician to His Majesty's Household, and Dr. *William Wasey*, as Physicians; and *Ambrose Dickins*, and *Claudius Anyand*, Esqs; Serjeant Surgeons to His Majesty, and *William Cheselden*, Esq; Surgeon to Her Majesty, as principal Surgeons, and Mr. *James Wilkie* as Surgeon in Ordinary.

These Gentlemen were all Subscribers to this Charity; and to their concurring Labours the Society have always hitherto most thankfully acknowledged the Preservation of the Lives of their Patients, under God, to be owing.

About two Years since, the Stock of the Society encreasing beyond Expectation, and their House being still too small, as well as old and ruinous, it became necessary to remove; and therefore Advertisements were published by Order of the Board for several Weeks together, enquiring after a large and substantial Building, in an airy Situation, within the City or Liberty of *Westminster*.

At length some Houses of Mr. *Green's* in and about *Castle-Lane*, in the lower Part of *Westminster*, and *Lanesborough-House* in the higher Part of it, being propos'd to the General Board, a Question arose which should be prefer'd.

The Majority were for the former; and they accordingly voted that Mr. *Green's* Houses were convenient for them, and that *Lanesborough-House* was not so; and they appointed a Committee finally to agree with Mr. *Green*.

The Minority, tho' over-ruled, were not convinced.

Among the Minority were all the above-named Physicians and Surgeons, together with several who had been concern'd in the Charity from its first Establishment, and some who had laid the Foundation of it several Years before, besides many others who had been very active and useful Instruments in carrying it on since.

All these (whose Subscriptions at *Lady-Day* last, with those of their Friends brought in by them, have been computed to amount to above the Half of the Whole) were of Opinion, that there was no Place about this Town more proper for their Purpose than *Lanesborough-House*.

An Hospital there, on account of its Neighbourhood, could give no Offence to any one; the Building was large and strong, and many of the Rooms were so contriv'd, as if they had been built for the Uses to which they were now to be apply'd; it was near enough to the Town to be supply'd with all the Necessaries that would be wanting, so near that the Governors might attend without Inconveniency, and yet far enough for the Patients to have the Benefit of a Country Air, which, in the general Opinion of the Physicians, would be more effectual than Physick in the Cure of many Distempers, especially such as mostly affect the Poor who live in close and confin'd Places within these great Cities.

For these Reasons they resolv'd to take *Lanesborough House*, and, if possible, to persuade the Majority to join with them.

But finding, at a subsequent General Board, that their Brethren were absolutely determin'd against it, and that it was in vain to hope for their Concurrence, They, the Minority, agreed that they ought not to let slip so advantageous an Opportunity of removing, and therefore they compleated their Agreement at 60 l. a Year, resolving to carry on the same Charity there.

Thereupon the Physicians and Surgeons acquainted the Board, that *Lanesborough-House* was taken; that they were resolv'd to carry their Charity and Attendance thither; that they could not attend both, but they would attend in *Chapel-street* till other Physicians and Surgeons should be provided; and if at any time their Assistance should be wanted, they would be ready to attend when desir'd.

Thus began the Separation, which has prov'd of great Service to the Charity; for now, by the Zeal and Emulation of both Societies, they will probably be able to entertain above four times the Number of Patients they have hitherto done.

Immediately after this, the Society in *Chapel-street* chose other Physicians and Surgeons, and the Gentlemen at *Lanesborough-House* set themselves vigorously to work to lay the Foundation of their New Hospital.

For that Purpose they met almost every Evening, and procur'd not only the By-Laws of all the Hospitals about the Town, but also the By-Laws of several Hospitals in Foreign Parts, out of which to collect such Rules and Orders as should best suit their Occasions; and having well weigh'd and consider'd the Undertaking, they form'd themselves into a regular Society on Friday the 19th of October 1733.

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Since that time they have collected and digested a regular Body of Laws for the Government of themselves, their Servants, and their Patients, extracted for the most Part from the several By-Laws that have been laid before them.

And as they had Reason to apprehend, that an Inconveniency might arise, by permitting small Subscribers to be Governors; no Man is qualified to be a Governor there that does not contribute 5*l*. a Year; and even then, he must be propos'd a Fortnight before he can be chosen, which is at last done by a Ballot.

Such is their Caution in the Choice of their Governors, of whom nevertheless they have already about 150, and from whom, as well as from several Ladies of Quality and Distinction, they have received very generous and beneficent Contributions.

The Hospital is now fitted up and made much more complete than could have been expected out of a Dwelling House: It will at present contain 60 Patients; but as the Boundaries of their Ground will admit of new Buildings for several spacious and airy Wards, large enough to lodge some Hundreds of Patients, better and more commodiously than any other Hospital about this Town; they propose to erect such Buildings as soon as their Circumstances shall enable them.

They began to receive Patients on *New-Years-Day* last; and several In and Out-patients were then receiv'd, and they continue so to do every *Wednesday* Morning until Ten of the Clock: They will admit as many In-patients as their House will contain, and Out-patients according to their Ability.

They have in their House an Apothecary, and a compleat Shop; and all the Physicians, Surgeons, Apothecaries, Chymists, and Druggists, are a Committee to buy the Drugs and other Materials for making the Medicines there; under whose Inspection all the Medicines are made: And the following Apothecaries, viz. *John Warren* and *Daniel Graham* Esqs; Apothecaries to His Majesty, *John Allen* Esq; Apothecary to His Majesty's Household, *Mr. Isaac Rand* Botany Professor of *Chelsea-College*, *Mr. John Clarke*, *Mr. Andrew Mitchell*, *Mr. Thomas Graham*, and *Mr. James Fraser*, attend by Rotation as Visitors, to see them duly dispensed according to the Prescriptions of the Physicians.

Among other Regulations, the following is proper to be here inserted, which is, That no Person belonging to this Hospital presume, upon Pain of Expulsion, to take of any In or Out-patient, any Fee, Reward, or Gratification whatever, directly or indirectly, for any Services received from this Hospital, either while they are under the Care of the House, or after they shall be discharg'd.

*Dr. Stuart*, *Dr. Wasey*, *Dr. Broxholme*, *Dr. Burton*, and *Dr. Ross*, who are all Governors, have consented to be the acting Physicians there, without Fee or Reward; the Patients are visited by them three times a Week, they all meet there every *Saturday* together, and they attend by Rotation every *Wednesday* Morning at Nine, to examine the Patients that are recommended.

*Mr. Serjeants Dickins* and *Amyand* and *Mr. Cheselden*, have consented to be principal Surgeons, and *Mr. Wilkie* and *Mr. Middleton* are the Surgeons in Ordinary: These Gentlemen are also Governors, and serve without Fee or Reward.

Several eminent Divines have agreed to attend the Patients daily, for their Spiritual Comfort and Instruction; and two of the Governors are weekly appointed, who attend every Day as Visitors, to hear Complaints, and to see the Orders of the Board punctually obeyed.

As the Business of this Hospital hath been too much for the Governors to manage in a Body, they have appointed several Committees, who all act with that Zeal, Integrity, and Application, as become Men who have only in View the Honour and Service of Almighty God, the publick Happiness and Prosperity of their Country, and the Support and Relief of their Fellow-Creatures in Distress.

*N. B.* The great Numbers of Objects that daily offer, are sufficient to shew the Usefulness and Necessity of Hospitals of this Kind: And tho' *Guy's Hospital*, a noble Endowment, hath been lately erected, yet more are still visibly wanted; and 'tis hoped the Example of these Gentlemen may be a Means to induce other well-disposed Persons to make this Kind of Charity more diffusive, and extend it to other Parts of the Kingdom.

*P. S.* As the Physicians attend every *Wednesday* Morning punctually at Nine, the Contributors to this Charity are desired to direct the Patients to be there at that Hour, the Board having made an Order that none shall be received after Ten.

## REMARKS upon the foregoing ACCOUNT.

THE Minority, who separated themselves from the *Infirmiry* at *Westminster*, have at length acted openly, so far at least as to favour the Publick with what they would have thought an Account of their Proceedings. They never amounted to twenty in the Divisions, and with these only is there any Difference; for tho' the Order of a General Board of Governors passed, yet that Board itself was determin'd by the Testimony of those few. Nay even among them, as named in the Account, all are not equally concerned. *Mr. Serjeant Dickins* and *Mr. Cheselden* were seldom or never present till the two last General Boards. *Dr. Teissier* was absent during the whole Debate; he therefore, as well as *Sir Hans Sloane*, and *Dr. Broxholme*, and the other great Names among their Governors, can have no Share in our present Dispute, which I hope will justify the Majority of Managers in the Old Charity, even to the satisfying the Majority in the New.

Any Reader of the foregoing Account would suppose the two Houses were both proposed at the same time. Whereas the Letter from *Mr. Lane* to *Dr. Stuart*, which contain'd no Proposal, but time desir'd, to consider whether he would lett this House for an *Infirmiry* or not, was produc'd by the Doctor on *September 7th*; but *Mr. Green's* Houses were proposed first, *June 13*, and again *August 29th* before, as appears from the *Infirmiry's* printed Paper, where Dates are to be met with, which the Minority avoid, questionless for good Reason. These Houses of *Mr. Green's* were viewed by *Dr. Teissier*, *Dr. Stuart*, *Dr. Wasey*, *Mr. Serjeant Amyand*, *Captain Hudson*, *Mr. Aspinwall*, and others, as a Committee, who reported on *June 20th*, That upon Examination of the said Houses, they were of Opinion they were very convenient and suitable for the *Infirmiry*.

They own a General Board appointed a Committee finally to agree with *Mr. Green*, and yet they resolved to act the direct contrary, tho' out-voted (or as they call it over-ruled) by more than seven to one. Now these very Gentlemen had engaged under their Hands, that the Place of Entertainment for the Poor should be approved by the Majority of Trustees present, and that all who subscribed should be Trustees of the Charity, as any one may see in the Preamble to our Subscription-Roll. They were early, active, and useful Members; what then? should 16 or 17 therefore dictate to 130? that would have been over-ruling indeed! Some of them laid the Foundation several Years before. This I am told may be contested, but their Modesty shall not be put to the Blush in proving it: Nay it will not be deny'd, but they have in their way laid the Foundation of an Hospital too.

From



From Zeal they pass to Wealth. Their Subscriptions, and those they have procured have been computed to amount at *Lady-Day* last, to above Half of the Whole. Observe their Manner of Proceeding as related by themselves. Instead of counting Subscribers they compute Subscriptions, and regard Persons absent, instead of present. Let any Man of common Sense judge, whether this be consistent with the Engagements they lay under. Why is *Lady-Day* named? 'Twould be too long to tell the whole Story, but a few Particulars must be mention'd; many more may be added at *their* Demand. Our most generous Benefactor was desirous of a Charter, and so was much the greater Part of the Society. A Committee was appointed to conduct that Affair, and a Draught of One made and agreed to, wherein all Subscribers were included, agreeable to our original Contract, the Preamble abovemention'd. About *Lady-Day* many new Subscribers came in. Whether this alarm'd the Gentlemen since separated from us, themselves best know; but a material Change was made in the Charter, when and how is the Question, only *such* and *such* were to be Governors, which provoked the Society so far, that they chose a Committee to petition against it. This is the main Cause of their Dislike of the *Lady-Day* Subscribers. For if the Smallness of Contributions be look'd at, they had as small among themselves.

We come now to the Reason for *Lanesborough-House*, tho' somewhat of the latest. I wish that Place had ten times more Conveniencies than it has, and therefore shall not endeavour to decry them, only one must be singled out to shew the peculiar Force of those Gentlemens Reasoning. 'Tis so near, the Governors might attend without Inconveniency. If this be meant of the Old Attenders, 'tis false in Fact: if of the New Governors of the Hospital, it cou'd be of no Consequence to us in our Debates; unless, as the *Minority* urged before their Merits *pass*, so here they insist upon their Merits *to come*.

Their Brethren, at a subsequent General Board, refused to concur, and they did the thing without them. This was twenty Days after it had been resolved finally to agree with Mr. *Green*. No matter for that, the *Minority* had strong Resolutions at least, to contradict their own Hand-writing. Perhaps it will be said, Was not that subscribing during Pleasure, and to be recall'd at Will? Yes: But surely it bound, while they positively declared they did not recall it, That they were Members of the Society and would continue such, That they had no Design to hurt it, That *Lanesborough-House* was taken by Gentlemen for *private Use*, for *their own Use*, or to that Effect, of which there are above 100 living Witnesses, present at the Board of September 27, not but they still generously offer'd *Lanesborough-House*, or Part of it at least, to the Board, if they pleased to accept of it. The Refusal whereof they call a great Uncivility, as I have been inform'd.

They proceed in their Narrative, and after saying they resolved to carry on the Charity at *Lanesborough-House*, immediately follows, Thereupon the Physicians and Surgeons acquainted the Board, &c. I appeal to any ingenious Reader, if he does not hereby understand, that the Resignation was made at the General Board already mentioned, whereas the direct contrary was there solemnly declared. 'Twas the Night following, September 28, at a Weekly Board, and not till then, the *Private Use* became Publick, those Members of our Society desired to be dismiss'd, a sure Token they belonged to it before, and therefore ought to have been bound by their own Subscriptions. I am inform'd this sudden Change of Declarations was occasion'd by a Gentleman more honourable than some about him, who flatly and fairly told them, that he would leave them if they were not explicit. They design'd us no Hurt the Night before, and yet they had then spoke to all they could get at, to send their Money to them in Opposition to us, really at least, tho' not avowedly. For some have actually contributed there without so much as knowing there was any Charity at all still subsisting at the *Old Place*, or any Disagreement among the Trustees. So full, so impartial, had been their Information!

What follows chiefly relating to *Lanesborough-House*, I shall no farther touch upon, than to obviate any Slur that may be thrown upon the *Infirmity*. For I pray God, who brings Good out of Evil, to bless that Hospital with the utmost Prosperity; and I see no Reason to doubt his Blessing, since a vast Majority there are entirely innocent of any false Steps at its Foundation.

Laws of Hospitals, both *English* and *Foreign*, have been regarded in the *Infirmity*. Was not Mr. Serjeant *Anyand* among us? Had he no Skill in those Matters before September 28, or was he not communicative of that Skill? I dare say it cannot be fancied that any at *Lanesborough-House* are better acquainted with such Affairs than some Gentlemen who, in the Infancy of this Charity, propos'd their Schemes, and were always oppos'd, even those good Measures set forth in this notable Account; and for the Truth of this, I appeal to *Two* of the Three Compilers of it.

Committees for doing Business are of excellent Use. Were they not often propos'd and often rejected in the *Infirmity*? When after much Struggle one was appointed to inspect the Medicines, the Chief of the *Minority* divided against it. Serving without Fee or Reward is justly commendable: But nevertheless, the *Minority* voted a Salary to our Surgeon in Ordinary, and afterwards procur'd an Advancement of that Salary. If they are grown wiser than before, I congratulate their Improvement; if they are over-ruled (as they call it) I am sure I ought to congratulate the Poor.

In a word I have nothing to say against their Constitution. I wish it perfecter than some imagine; who doubt whether the *£1*. a Year that qualifies for a Governor, be to be paid in Specie, or whether Part of it admits of an *Equivalent*. Suppose it conducted, by the most consummate Wisdom; I am sure this is not to be imputed to the *Infirmity* as a Fault, but the Hospital as a Virtue.

I have given a Specimen of the Dealings of the *Minority*. Let them disprove it if they can, and call for more if they please, it stands ready. Many verbal Abuses no doubt will be thrown upon these Remarks, as were before upon the Letter above printed. But our Books and our Witnesses are to be consulted at any time; and whosoever will give himself the Trouble of applying to those authentick Vouchers, will meet with abundant Proof of what is here asserted; and will be thoroughly satisfied, that I have not made it my Business to *expose a Few*, but to *defend a great many*, who, I am perswaded, the more this Matter is examined, will be found still the more, to do justly and to love Mercy.



A small Minority of

MAJORITY of the INFIRMARY  
WESTMINSTER,  
OF THE  
DEFENCE